

Teresa Eickel

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Interreligious Eco-Justice Network

Re: Comprehensive Energy Strategy & Governor's Bill 6360

My name is Teresa Eickel and I would like to thank you for hearing my testimony today. Today I would like to comment on the Comprehensive Energy Strategy & Governor's Bill 6360. I am the Executive Director of the Interreligious Eco-Justice Network, a faith-based environmental group working to empower religious communities in CT to be faithful stewards of the earth. In my capacity as Executive Director and representing hundreds of faith communities, I would like to comment today.

There are a few aspects of the Comprehensive Energy Strategy that I would like to highlight. First, I believe that we should secure funding for energy efficiency measures for all fuels. I do a lot of presentations on climate change with a special emphasis on reducing carbon footprints through energy efficiency measures, such as the Home Energy Solutions program. The fact that oil funding is neither as secure or as comprehensive as the funding for natural gas and electric is both detrimental to the program and morally wrong. Many of the faith communities that I work with provide services and support to people in their community – service and support that these people wouldn't be able to get elsewhere. But instead of being able to allocate more funds to help their brothers and sisters, many of these communities struggle to pay their heating bills. I've talked to churches that go through thousands and thousands of oil each season and are still cold all winter long. It isn't right. It is time to make the oil companies participate in energy efficiency funding and I urge you to make that part of this bill.

I would also like to state my support for preserving the integrity of Class I Renewables. The Interreligious Eco-Justice Network does not support diluting the portfolio with Canadian hydro or trash incineration. Renewable energy is supposed to be a clean, eco-friendly energy source - to include either Canadian large-scale hydro or trash incineration makes a mockery of what renewables are supposed to stand for.

Finally, I would like to urge caution when it comes to developing natural gas. It is very easy to think, because natural gas is cheaper than oil, that it is a solution to our energy problems. It is a very short-term solution, at best. When we consider natural gas, we should also consider the environmental and climate impacts from extracting and burning it. Instead of putting our eggs into another fossil fuel basket, CT should lead the way on renewable energy, by removing barriers to renewable energy installations and signing long-term contracts for renewable generated in New England.

Connecticut has the opportunity to be a true leader in the fields of energy efficiency, renewable energy, and climate justice. I urge you to move us in the direction that will ensure a clean, just, and sustainable future for all of God's creation. Thank you.